

Rep. Rick Jones seeks to create criminal penalty for dumping of aborted fetuses (w/ video)

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LANSING -- State Rep. Rick Jones has introduced legislation to create criminal penalties for the improper disposal of aborted fetuses in the wake of 17 fetuses that he says were found in a trash dumpster outside a Delta Township abortion clinic.

In a news conference today, the Grand Ledge Republican said authorities have concluded that WomansChoice Clinic did not violate the law by placing the fetuses in formaldehyde in a plastic bag and then disposing them in a dumpster shared by other businesses.

Chris Veneklase, a pro-life advocate from Holt, said he discovered the 17 fetuses Feb. 26 in a dumpster outside the clinic at 6500 Centurion Drive, after observing clinic staff members dispose of trash. He said he was alarmed by the discovery.

"We live in a time and place where children are torn to tiny pieces within their mother's wombs and then thrown out with the trash for the mice and rats to feed on," he said.

A staff person answering the phone at WomansChoice clinic said the clinic would have no comment.

Joy Yearout, a spokesman for the Michigan Attorney General's Office, said the office began an investigation in the matter in April, in conjunction with the Eaton County Sheriff's Department and state Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. She said state officials concluded the clinic did not violate state law in disposing of the fetuses.

Jones, along with Reps. Joe Haveman, R-Holland, and Bob Genetski, R-Saugatuck, have introduced legislation in the state House that would require aborted fetuses to be medically cremated, or buried if the parents request it. Any person who violates the law would face up to three years in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine.

Jones said he believed the attorney general was continuing to investigate whether the clinic violated patient confidentiality laws by improperly disposing of patient records, which included the names of mothers seeking abortions, in

the dumpster. Yearout declined to say whether the office was looking the matter.

Read Thursday's Lansing State Journal for more on this report.

UPDATED 6:30 P.M.

LANSING – State Rep. Rick Jones, R-Grand Ledge, plans a news conference Wednesday to announce that 17 aborted fetuses were found in a dumpster outside an abortion clinic in Delta Township and to unveil legislation to ensure the proper disposal of fetuses.

Jones will be joined by a Michigan resident, Chris Veneklase, who allegedly discovered the fetuses Feb. 26. Dr. Monica Miller, director of Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, will also participate.

The anti-abortion group says in a news release that trash dumpsters were searched outside the WomansChoice Clinic in Delta Township and a sister clinic in Saginaw. It retrieved medical waste and patient records, and says they weren't properly disposed, violating patient confidentiality and proper medical standards.

A message was left with WomansChoice Clinic seeking comment. No one was immediately available.

An investigation into the Delta Township clinic and an affiliated clinic in Saginaw County found no violations of the public health code, according to Joy Yearout, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Attorney General's Office.

A complaint was filed in April, and the investigation concluded this month, Yearout said. Agencies involved included the Attorney General's Office, the Eaton County Prosecutor's Office and sheriff's departments in both counties.

Neither Jones nor Citizens for a Pro-Life Society indicated whether they think laws were broken.

Check www.lsj.com for updates.